

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ANKARA 01861 131023Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 OMB-01
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NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DOE-11 SOE-02
HA-05 /105 W

-----088213 131438Z /46

R 130810Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1015
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BERN
AMEMBASSY GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 1861

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, TU, GR, CY
SUBJ: ECEVIT TRIES TO CHANGE TURKEY'S IMAGE

REF: PARIS 8073 (DTG 071743Z MAR 78)

1. WE APPRECIATE EMBASSY PARIS' FULL REPORT ON ECEVIT'S
FIGARO INTERVIEW AND WE AGREE THAT HE WAS BIDDING FOR
BETTER FRENCH COMPREHENSION OF TURKISH VIEWS--AND PERHAPS
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PAGE 02 ANKARA 01861 131023Z

EVEN HOPING TO INVOLVE GISGARD AS A SYMPATHETIC INTERMEDIARY.
THE EXCHANGE WITH FIGARO WAS ONE OF SEVERAL PRE-SUMMIT
FOREIGN PRESS INTERVIEWS IN WHICH ECEVIT EXPLAINED HIS
MOTIVATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS VIS-A-VIS THE MONTREUX SUMMIT.

2. WE BELIEVE ECEVIT'S PURPOSE WAS NOT ONLY TO SET THE STAGE FOR

MONTREUX, BUT ALSO TO ADVANCE A LARGER EFFORT TO SEIZE THE PROPAGANDA INITIATIVE FROM THE GREEKS. FOR YEARS TURKS HAVE BELIEVED THEMSELVES UNABLE TO COMPETE WITH GREEKS IN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PROPAGANDA EFFORTS. WHILE THEY HAVE RECOGNIZED THAT THIS FAILURE TO COMPETE HAD HANDICAPPED THEM IN PURSUIT OF THEIR INTERNATIONAL GOALS, THEY ACCEPTED IT WITH A STUBBORN PRIDE AND RATIONALIZED BY SAYING THEY WOULD NOT STOOP TO TRYING TO CURRY FAVOR AND UNDERSTANDING FROM OTHER NATIONS.

3. ECEVIT IS DIFFERENT. HE IS JOURNALIST BY PROFESSION. HE IS EXPERIENCED IN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY. HE RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING UNDERSTOOD, AND HE IS NOT ONLY AN ARTICULATE ADVOCATE OF TURKISH POSITIONS HE ALSO SEEMS TO ENJOY THE CHALLENGE.

4. AS WE HAVE POINTED OUT PREVIOUSLY, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS, THE TURKS HAVE A SPOKESMAN CAPABLE OF COMPETING WITH THE GREEKS IN THE RACE FOR INTERNATIONAL APPROVAL AND UNDERSTANDING. AND ECEVIT HAS ENTERED THE RACE WHOLEHEARTEDLY.

5. THE INITIAL RESULTS OF HIS EFFORTS HAVE BEEN GOOD FROM THE TURKISH POINT OF VIEW. HIS PROMISE OF NEW CYPRUS PROPOSALS, HIS PUBLIC DE-LINKING OF CYPRUS AND US-TURKISH RELATIONS AND HIS INITIATIVE FOR THE GREEK-TURKISH SUMMIT AVE BEEN PUBLIC RELATIONS--IF NOT YET SUBSTANTIVE--SUCSESSES. THE WIDESPREAD IMPRESSION THAT TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY IS FUNDAMENTALLY UNIMAGINATIVE AND NEGATIVE HAS NOT DISAPPEARED, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ANKARA 01861 131023Z

BUT IT HAS BEEN CHALLENGED. IF ECEVIT IS ABLE TO KEEP UP HIS RECENT PACE, AND ESPECIALLY IF HE SHOULD BE SUCCESSFUL IN RESOLVING OR DRAMATICALLY IMPROVING ONE OF TURKEY'S MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS--GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS, CYPRUS, US-TURKISH RELATIONS--NEGATIVE IMPRESSIONS OF TURKEY AND TURKS WILL HAVE BEEN DEALT A HEALTHY BLOW.
SPIERS

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